

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE**

Thursday, September 9, 2010  
Senate Hearing Room 1 - 1:30 P.M.

Chairman Maguire called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M. and attendance was noted by the secretary.

## **1. Call to order**

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman  
Dr. John Baracy  
Ms. Margaret Dugan  
Dr. Eugene Garcia  
Ms. Johanna Haver  
Ms. Eileen Klein  
Ms. Karen Merritt

Absent:

Mr. Jim DiCello  
Ms. Anna Rosas

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

## **2. Discussion of Possible Changes to Task Force's Models of Structured English Immersion (This is not an action item.)**

Mr. Maguire stated that the majority of the terms end on September 21, 2010. The handout discusses time allocations, English Language Proficiency Standards and how it relates to the Discrete Skills Inventory, AZELLA and academic standards, ILLP process, training, and monitoring. Mr. Maguire stated he'd like to get the members' sense of the issues. He also stated that he remembered Dr. Baracy would like to have presentations on the successes of the models and that will come at a later meeting. Mr. Maguire stated that he hoped some input would come in from the field.

Mr. Maguire began to discuss the time allocations. He invited discussion on how the time allocations should be different, and whether they should be different during middle school, high school, or elementary school.

Dr. Garcia stated that the ELL Task force was legislated to determine the allocation of the four hours. He stated that his predecessors need to evaluate time allocations based on more empirical data and other empirical considerations.

Mr. Maguire asked Dr. Garcia regarding the four hours what the Task Force should do.

Dr. Garcia stated that within the confines of the four hours, he stated that the four hours should be driven by content and that there is not a one-size fits all block. The task force can articulate a set of options that works for kids and then give good advice to the state so they are not settled to specific time dimensions.

Mr. Maguire stated that there are different subject matters within English Language Development (ELD). He stated that one of the challenges in the field is how to fill up the four hours. Eventually, the Task Force came up with the time allocations. How do we deal with the subcomponents?

Ms. Merritt stated that from a high school perspective, the four hours is not as problematic as it may be for K-6. She stated there are concerns about students being segregated from their mainstream peers. But the intention is to frontload English so that they are successful in their mainstream classes. There is more success getting the kids out in two years rather than three and success in the mainstream classrooms looks good. She thinks the next Task Force should look at the phonology listening and speaking component. It is not clear what the high school intermediate component should look like, but more clear for the Basic and Emergent levels. She would like more clear direction on how that happens. It could be a more clear designation within the existing classes.

Ms. Dugan stated that she'd like to discuss results and that she believes they drive instruction. She thinks the next Task Force needs to look at results.

Mr. Maguire stated that the Department is in the process of collecting information on results.

Ms. Dugan stated that she believes we should review school districts that have focused on the four hours with fidelity and identify those schools that have high reclassification rates and should be reviewed. The other piece that she would like to see is that the idea of the models is that students are proficient in language acquisition. It is important for the next Task Force to understand that the law is written for students who do not speak English and as soon as they acquire a good understanding of English they are to be mainstreamed.

Mr. Maguire stated that he remembers that the Task Force did spend time on that issue in the beginning. They looked at the intent of the drafters of the law and that helped guide their discussions. He stated that this was helpful to the current Task Force.

Ms. Dugan stated that she agrees that at the high school level the four hours work very well. At the elementary level, she thinks that it's a good idea to bring in examples of elementary schools that have done well with the four hours. It might be good to look at some flexibility in the second year of Structured English Immersion for those who have had success in the second year.

Mr. Maguire asked why the high school model of four hours works better than four hours in the elementary schools.

Ms. Merritt stated that it is easier for students to manage a four hour program in high school and middle school because they are changing classes every hour. She stated that it is becoming more difficult with the added requirements of science and math. She stated that a student who passed all classes could graduate on time, but it is not likely, especially due to the math requirements. Ms. Merritt stated that the emotional and physical maturity of the student also matters on whether they are successful in the four hours. The intention for students is that they have four hours of English in one year and then they mainstream. Because the academic vocabulary is higher in high school, it really takes two years before students are able to mainstream. Maybe that Task Force wants to look at support for math classes, possibly SEI math. She wants them mainstreamed but she's worried about how they would do in the mainstream without the addition of SEI instruction. Ms. Merritt stated that the four hour model is easier in high school. It's more difficult in the elementary schools because it is basically a full day of instruction.

Mr. Maguire stated that part of the challenge is that Ms. Merritt wants ELL students to take content courses but they need the skills in English to make the content learning valuable.

Dr. Garcia stated that children need access to English but also access to content. He doesn't think there is the kind of guidance to the field on how to integrate content. He stated that the field needs a lot more exemplars of how the four hour block intersects with content. Dr. Garcia added that he doesn't always agree with Ms. Dugan, but agrees that we need to look at results.

Ms. Klein stated that since teachers are held more accountable now for individual student performance it will take some thinking through when it comes to ELL because the schools' application of these models may be different. Students may be individual learners rather than group learners and it is important that we have a fair system of evaluation of teachers.

Mr. Maguire stated that in the first few months, the field provided testimony stating they needed help in what to do in the classroom. This is why the DSI was introduced. The DSI may have been too complex. Teachers need help on how to get the DSI into the classroom. We know teachers want to get it into the classroom and this was shown with the High Intensity Summer English Proficiency (HISEP) program.

Ms. Haver stated that she believes it is a good idea to start with results but it does take a few years. She referred to the young man from Tempe Union HSD and that he was motivated by learning content. If we are going to be teaching content we have to make sure that the students are learning the skills they need at the same time and that is difficult.

Mr. Maguire stated that is the challenge that lead Tempe Union HSD to try what they did.

Dr. Baracy stated that early on in the discussions the Task Force discussed suggested changes for the legislature. Today, he heard "let's live within the box" of the four hour models. But he wants to think outside of the box. He would like the Task Force to be more flexible and look at other innovative programs. Dr. Baracy stated that if there was more freedom in future legislation, school districts could try some other innovative programs. He stated that the current language is too prescriptive to allow school districts to think outside of the box.

Mr. Maguire questioned Dr. Baracy's definition of prescriptive.

Dr. Baracy stated that he meant that the law was too prescriptive.

Ms. Haver stated that the problem is that the results of teaching ELLs are dismal and for that reason we are prescribing what they have to do. If we don't tell school districts to teach grammar, they won't teach grammar. If the models are not prescriptive, then teachers will show movies. We have to oversee and make sure that the students are learning. It's hard to be flexible based on the poor results that we've had.

Dr. Garcia stated that nationally there are some outstanding programs out there now. States' Race to the Top proposals are public. When compared to AZ, other states are at 50-60% reclassification and their achievement gap is down. There is nothing like that in Arizona. There are some really good examples at the state and local level. These statistics are on the Race to the Top proposals and they have to report their achievement gains. The states where there have been increases are D.C., Colorado, and Utah.

Ms. Haver stated that because the mainstream do so poorly that is why there is such a big gap compared to the reclassification of ELL students in these states. She stated that she has read numerous articles regarding poor results from Colorado.

Ms. Klein stated how unlikely it is for students to graduate if they are not proficient in English. She stated we would be well served by knowing what models are effective in other states and what could work on a state-wide basis. We should honor the original intent for students to become proficient in English so they can graduate. We must recognize that even geographically we will continue to have challenges.

Ms. Merritt stated that since we first started talking about models she questioned if we should have a one-size fits all model for K-12. One other concern she has is that often we are talking about a model that would address students who are the “languishing intermediate level.” She stated that she sees where this model can help to ease that. However, she is still not certain that we are on the right track for students who just arrived in the U.S. and need to learn English. She questioned whether the model mostly addresses the long term intermediate student or if it also meets the needs of the brand new immigrant or refugee.

Dr. Garcia stated he has heard stories of students who enter and exit the ELL program and they are lingering in the ELL program. He asked Ms. Merritt if this is what she was addressing.

Ms. Merritt stated that was not what she was talking about but it would be a good idea to look at those students who bounce back to non-proficient.

Ms. Haver stated there was a research study regarding students who were in the SEI program longer than three years and that there is a danger keeping them in the program longer than three years and that it was actually a detriment to them after three years. Ms. Haver stated that sometimes we enable students by keeping them at a lower level because they are not being challenged properly.

Dr. Garcia stated that the Task Force and the Department need to look into the AZELLA. There is an Office for Civil Rights (OCR) report that states the AZELLA is high stakes, meaning it states how to get in and out of the ELD program. He thinks the Task Force needs some guidance. This test is a cornerstone to determine if a student gets services or not. This agency is stating that the state is violating students’ rights. There needs to be some guidance to the field. He stated that OCR included a proposed agreement. There are other instruments that can be used. Dr. Garcia stated that we need to revisit how the AZELLA is being used in a high stakes manner.

Mr. Maguire stated that he knows the Department is working on updating the English Language Proficiency standards. It is important that all those pieces work together, the AZELLA and the standards. The alignment of the standards with the DSI is fundamental so that students are able to succeed in the mainstream classroom and to make sure that the transition into the mainstream isn’t too abrupt.

Mr. Maguire brought up ILLPs. He stated that in the beginning, this is what school districts would do if they had a small number of ELLs. After time, the break points regarding ILLPs were adjusted and the use of ILLPs has really morphed from being a remedy for the low end school to being a method that applies to a residual ELL, a student that was originally in a large

group, but the majority of the students reclassified so the student is put on an ILLP. It originally appeared that this did not apply to the bulk of ELL students, but now they are being used by a whole other group of students. Mr. Maguire asked how are the ILLPs working. They are a tool that was originally designed for “A” and now they are being used for “B.”

Ms. Dugan stated she would like to hear testimony regarding the ILLPs. She originally didn’t like ILLPs because she thought they would be difficult to implement into the classroom.

Mr. Maguire stated it would be useful to see how ILLPs work.

Ms. Merritt stated that we should compare results of schools that have ILLPs with a pull-out model for an hour or two versus schools with self-contained ILLPs without a pull-out model. She stated that she doesn’t know how they teach the direct instruction of grammar in a mainstream classroom on an ILLP. She stated that maybe this is easier in an elementary classroom where all of the students need this type of instruction in grammar as opposed to a high school classroom.

Mr. Maguire stated that the grammar needs of an ELL student are different than the grammar needs of a native language speaker and that is complicated also by the grade level.

Dr. Garcia stated that differentiated instruction is something teachers need to do. He stated that response to intervention needs to be integrated in the classroom. He also stated that digital learning in regard to learning grammar needs to be integrated into the classroom. With all of these elements, we were foreshadowing what teachers have to do today to manage different learners in the classroom. He agrees that we need to look real hard at ILLPs to individualize instruction.

Mr. Maguire brought up training. He stated that the Task Force heard so much about the need for training from the field. The models were a big change and the best way to facilitate any big change is with assistance. The implementation in the beginning was choppy. Some districts tried to implement the models before receiving the training. It took approximately two years to catch up with the training. He asked the members if they have any suggestions regarding training.

Ms. Haver stated that she believes there should be training in the Colleges of Education that match what will be happening in the schools. The way this has been resolved is to have separate training. The teachers come out of the Colleges of Education with one philosophy and then we have to change that with the training.

Mr. Maguire asked Dr. Garcia how that happened.

Dr. Garcia stated that he is no longer Dean of Education. However, he stated that the general feeling is how to produce results. Education programs must be tied to academic performance. Teachers need to produce outcomes and produce results for kids. The general feeling in Arizona and around the country is that we need results.

Mr. Maguire asked how results in a classroom end up impacting the university classroom.

Dr. Garcia stated that there must be a good assessment system and a way to identify teachers. This does not exist here in Arizona. Arizona is headed in that direction.

Mr. Maguire stated in theory he could take two teachers who went to same college with different coursework and would be able to distinguish between schools and coursework between schools.

Dr. Garcia stated that you must have the data system.

Ms. Haver stated that she knows some young teachers. In one example, the English learners were separate and she had been indoctrinated that this was wrong. So, Ms. Haver invited her to the Task Force but she didn't show up. A few months later Ms. Haver spoke with her and this teacher was thrilled by the ELL program and that it was working. Now, she is a strong proponent of the model. She started out with a very negative attitude and it came from her classes at the College of Education.

Mr. Maguire stated that his college ideas have been tempered with experience.

Dr. Garcia stated there was a study at U of A that stated teachers had not been trained to do a good job in the classroom.

Dr. Baracy asked what does the Department of Education use to measure the effectiveness of the training.

Mr. Maguire stated that there were real time reviews done. That is different than a longitudinal study.

Dr. Baracy stated that he wants to review the effectiveness of the previous trainings in order to evaluate what to do next.

Ms. Klein stated that the next Task Force should contemplate how to go beyond that training and further support that teacher. In Race to the Top, it tied together the goals of the state and talked about need for key interventions and implementation. There were two goals: 1) web based

resources teachers could tap into on their own time online, beyond student data related to techniques and other helpful information; 2) people based approach that we would create regional centers for excellence around the state and address specific problems they were facing and have access to academics that could further support their efforts. The goal now is to find out how to move forward on these goals to support teachers. The next task force needs to look at how to go beyond this training.

Mr. Maguire stated that we had testimony from a few districts and one district had a classroom that was videotaped and best practices were created within the districts and the other districts could watch. It was Cartwright. Mr. Maguire stated that maybe that is a pretty good model. He stated that when he observed the training it was more about why the models exist, rather than how to implement the models. It's important to focus on what to do. It has been a struggle to get funding for the Compensatory Instruction fund and the SEI model funding. And it continues to be a challenge.

Ms. Klein stated that we should further press to see what other resources are available. She stated that much of this is predicated on this data system and that this investment needs to be made. She stated the Task Force needs to reorganize around these effective strategies.

Mr. Maguire talked about monitoring. He stated that the Task Force has received regular reports on the monitoring process from the Department of Education. He stated that which you watch is done well and that which you don't watch is done less well. Mr. Maguire stated that much like the training, the monitoring followed the same pattern as the training. At first, the purpose of the monitoring was to see if the school districts were implementing the four hours. The next question should go beyond that into how are the districts implementing the models. Mr. Maguire stated that the Task Force needs data to make evaluations.

Dr. Garcia stated that because this was a new intervention, training was needed. But he also stated that he's not sure that monitoring and compliance is what was needed. Some members of the field stated that they don't need monitoring and compliance, but they need support.

Ms. Merritt stated that some monitoring was done with the expectation that some teachers had done training but they hadn't yet done the training so that is problematic.

Ms. Merritt referred to technology. She stated that she remembered a day when Kevin Clark stated that teachers are not teaching phonology and Ms. Merritt responded that teachers are teaching phonology but are doing it with software. As much as we need to teach students English, districts need to integrate technology. It is important to meet the technology needs of the students. In her district, more than half of the students are international refugees and have



not had exposure to technology. These students must learn American culture, including technology.

Mr. Maguire stated that maybe we can find some centralized place where best practices are housed.

Ms. Merritt stated that with technology the formative assessment is already built in. She stated that the differentiation can happen because the teacher can see what level the student is at. She stated she didn't want to forget that important part of training.

Mr. Maguire asked how the technology part of training is valid.

Ms. Merritt stated that there is a vendor who presented to the Task Force when they were discussing formative assessment, but due to the nature of the differentiation it was very successful and valid. The students are passing the AZELLA and are making progress in their other classes.

Ms. Haver stated that in the monitoring there were teachers using sub-standard grammar and the state was criticized for this. Ms. Haver asked how these teachers could become certified if they are not fluent in English. She stated that perhaps we need to look at accreditation to see that it matches what we want in the classroom. If teachers don't have the ability to teach what they want to teach, this needs to be addressed.

Mr. Maguire stated that it is an inevitable consequence of putting more pressure on the system. He stated that he had a friend who worked for the State of Arizona and they wanted to improve salaries. He stated "if I could have paid more, I wouldn't have hired the guys I hired." That kind of thinking puts pressure on the teachers. Maybe it didn't matter before, but it does now.

Ms. Klein stated that it's how we manage performance today. She stated that we wanted to see that we were getting results as quickly as possible. The approach to top-down monitoring is perhaps because we haven't perfected performance management in the schools yet. The issue is how do we introduce more performance management into the school. The people in schools have perfected their academic portion of their skill set and we need to teach them this other portion of their skill set. It would be great if we could transform this from a top down down system into a more organic performance system.

Dr. Garcia stated that it's a system.

Mr. Maguire stated that to the extent that "if I'm a teacher and I can get real time feedback, I'm going to do what works before the top down monitoring comes." That would help teachers a lot.

There's a lot of data out there. Mr. Maguire stated that performance monitoring has a million different versions in corporate America. It eliminates the requirement for final outcome measures.

Ms. Haver stated that she wondered if the teachers feel the AZELLA is too difficult or too easy.

Mr. Maguire stated that teachers struggle with when to use it and when not to use it. He didn't hear whether it's too easy or too hard. Mr. Maguire stated that he wants to know more about students who test out and then don't stay out. Is it a failure to align the ELP standards with the academic standards? Is it because the performance standard on the AZELLA is too low for the academic standard at the grade-level? Over time, as we get more data, it will become clearer. For most teachers, they know more than they used to know, but not as much as they'd like to know. He stated that he is cautiously optimistic that we are moving in the right direction.

Dr. Garcia stated that this Task Force took the four hour block mandated by the legislature and said that's the model. In the future, we need a more comprehensive model that expands opportunities to learn, maybe afterschool, Saturday, or summer school programs included in the model. The students need expanded opportunities to learn. Another part to include is family and parental involvement. If they parents know what's going on they may be better able to help their children.

Mr. Maguire stated that this is the last meeting of the Task Force. He stated that at the last meeting there were plaques distributed and a Proclamation from the Governor was read. Mr. Maguire stated that there are copies of the Proclamation for each member. Mr. Maguire stated that it has been an honor and a pleasure to work together for the last four years.

### **3. Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Activities**

No discussion.

### **4. Call to the Public**

No Request to Speak forms were presented to the Chairman.

### **5. Discussion of future meeting dates**

This was the last meeting of the Task Force as currently composed.

### **6. Adjournment**

**Mr. Maguire moved without objection that the meeting adjourn.**

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 2:56 P.M.

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Alan Maguire, Chairman  
English Language Learners Task Force

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Date